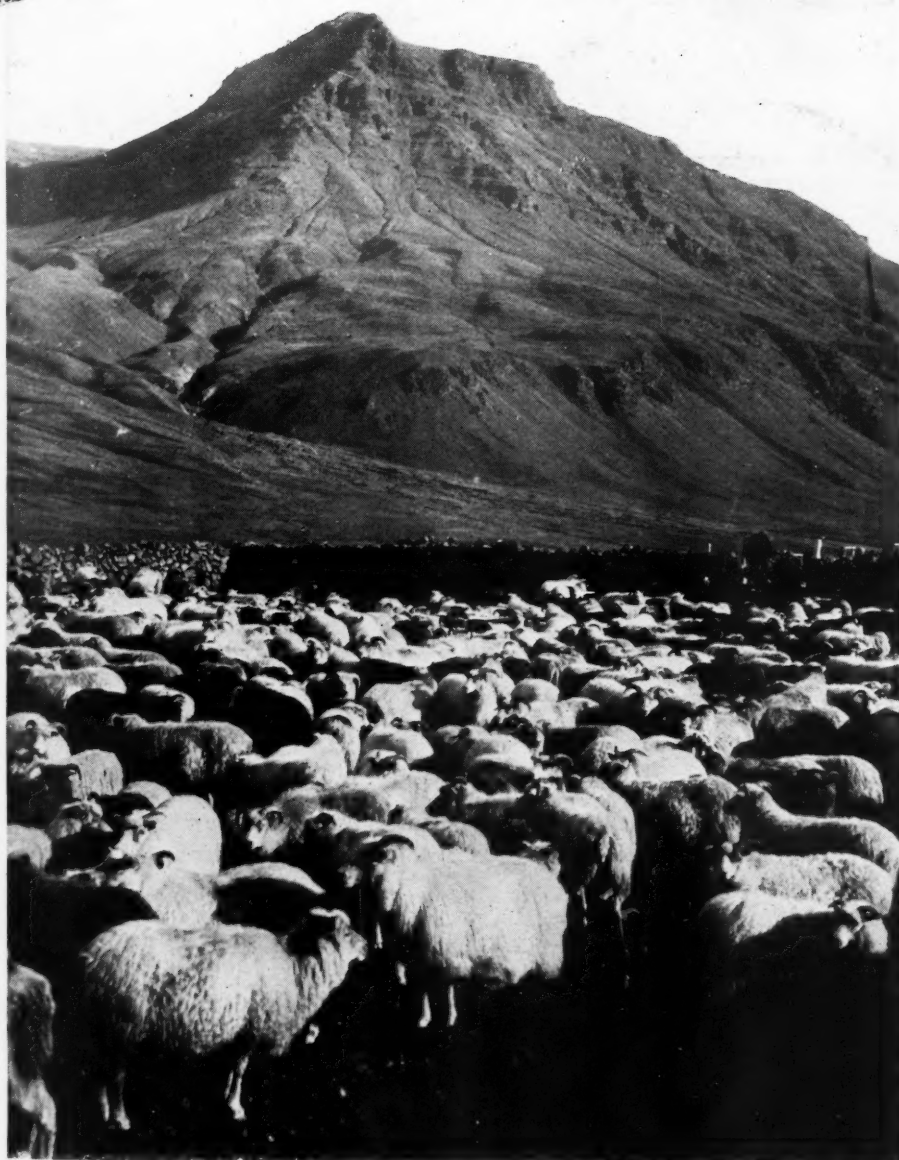


JULY, 1928

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HALLDÓR HERMANSSON, Professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literatures in Cornell University, is Curator of the magnificent Icelandic Collection assembled by Willard Fiske and bequeathed by him to Cornell, a library richly furnished with the literature of Iceland of old and modern times. Professor Hermannsson, himself of Icelandic birth, has been associated with Cornell University since 1905 and his writings are of the most authoritative and most soundly scholarly of all American expositions of Icelandic culture, history, and letters. His catalogue of the Fiske Collection is considered to be the most complete bibliography of Icelandic books that has yet appeared, as well as of foreign books about Iceland and its literature. His essay on the world's oldest parliament, the Althing of Iceland, prepares us for the coming celebration, in 1930, of the thousandth year since that notable little state of the North Atlantic set up a parliamentary government.

THEO. FINDAHL brings us to the Iceland of our own day, answering the common questions of how one comes to Iceland, what he finds there, and how the people live. Mr. Findahl is an experienced traveller and writer of books of travel whose descriptions of cloisters and arenas in Spain was lately popular in Norway.

The daughter of an Icelandic-American who devoted years of his life to chronicling the progress of the Icelandic people in America, **MISS THORSTINA JACKSON** has inherited her father's task and has continued his writings. Since she visited Iceland a year ago, Miss Jackson has written and lectured frequently on life in Iceland.

For the illustrations in this number of the REVIEW we are especially indebted to Miss Jackson, to **MR. H. B. MACDONALD**, a popular American lecturer on Iceland, and to **PROFESSOR GUDMUNDUR FINNBOGASON** of the University of Iceland.

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THROUGH A CHASM AT THINGVALLA

THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW

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A Thousand-Year-Old Parliament

By HALLDÓR HERMANNSSON

THE colonization of Iceland by Norwegians in the latter half of the ninth century and the earlier half of the tenth century was one of the most important events of the Viking Age. Of the various Scandinavian colonies established during that period Iceland is the only one which has preserved the language of the colonists down to our days, and Icelandic literature gives us better pictures of those distant times than are to be found anywhere else; even some of the institutions peculiar to the race have lived there longest. None of these is more venerable than the *Althing*, or the Icelandic parliament, which, in spite of the numerous changes it has undergone from time to time as to form and functions, presents a historical continuity through ten centuries. The establishment of it in the year 930 is one of the most instructive and interesting phenomena in the history of the Middle Ages, and gives us an uncommonly good insight into the organization and workings of a genuine Germanic state. It is probably the oldest of all now existing national assemblies, or parliaments, in the civilized world, and is, as James Bryce writes, "one of the very few which did not grow up imperceptibly and from very small beginning, but was formally and on set purpose established by the deliberate agreement of independent groups of men seeking to attain the common end of order and justice."

✓✓

The father of the *Althing* was Ulfjót, a venerable chieftain and Godi, one of those pagan priests with secular power who formed the leading class in Iceland. On his own initiative, and with the consent of his peers, he went to Norway to study the constitution of the various Norwegian assemblies, and to consult there men well-versed in law. In the meantime his foster brother, Grim Goatbeard, explored the whole island in order to select a suitable meeting-place for the prospec-

tive national assembly. When Ulfljótt returned from three years of study and work in Norway with the draft of an Icelandic constitution, Grim had chosen the meeting-place on the north shore of the big lake in the southwestern part of the country which from that circumstance has derived its name of Lake Thingvalla. This region is one of the most impressive and beautiful in the country. It was, however, probably not chosen for the special purpose because of its beauty, but on account of the numerous material advantages it had to offer to a large gathering of men with their horses. Here the new national assembly under the name of *Althing*, literally General Assembly, was formally established in the year mentioned above, as we may presume, and here it continued to meet every year for nearly nine hundred years.

The earliest constitution of Iceland, the so-called *Law of Ulfljótt*, is not known in all its details. The three principal elements of it were the office of a Lawspeaker, who should keep the people informed about the laws of the land in force at the time, the legislative body called *Lögretta* (literally law-amending), and the judicial body called the Court of the Althing. This last was some thirty years later supplanted by four Quarter Courts, representing each of the quarters into which the country was divided, and still later a Fifth Court was added, a kind of supreme tribunal to which cases could be appealed from the other courts. The real power of governing and legislating was in the hands of the hereditary Godis, or heathen priests and chieftains, who originally numbered thirty-six, but whose number varied somewhat from time to time. Thus the form of government was that of an aristocratic oligarchy, and it remained so for more than three centuries.

The Althing met yearly for two weeks during the latter half of June; slight changes were made as to this later. All the Godis and freeholders, who were not otherwise exempted or excused, were under obligation to be present at the sessions in order to carry out the various legislative and judicial functions of the institution. The proceedings often gave rise to dramatic incidents, as any reader of the Icelandic sagas will remember, and although the tension of the contending parties frequently was great, it was extremely rare that the peace was broken within the consecrated precincts of the assembly. It was not, however, only legislators, judges, and litigants who were present at the Althing. Besides them all sorts and conditions of people were to be seen there, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, athletes, jugglers and other entertainers, story-tellers, merchants, in short, representatives of all classes of the population who came there partly for business, partly for pleasure. In the absence of any capital city in the country, the Althing was virtually the capital of the commonwealth for two weeks in the year, during the rest of the time there was none, as no executive power was provided for in the

constitution, a curious phenomenon, seldom found elsewhere, and apparently only made possible here because of the great distance of the island from other countries. It was, however, this unusual lack of executive office which in the end caused the downfall of the commonwealth and loss of political independence.

When the Icelanders, after a prolonged civil war, finally submitted to the king of Norway in 1262-64, they stipulated that no change should be made in their laws and customs. This the king observed for less than a decade; as early as 1271 he forwarded to Iceland a new law code for acceptance by the people; the Althing passed it with great reluctance, which caused the king to issue another law code in 1281 to supplant the first one. This which is known as the *Jónsbók* was accepted by the Althing in the same year and remained in force for centuries. By this new legislation changes were made in the composition of the Althing. The power of the Godis was forever broken, and they were largely replaced by the king's appointees and representatives; the office of the Lawspeaker was abolished and ultimately two Lawmen took his place; furthermore, certain number of men were under obligation to meet every summer at the Althing in order, together with the officials and the judges appointed by the king, to discharge the various legislative and judicial duties. By this new order of things the meetings of the Althing gradually lost their character of popular gatherings, as only those came there who had some business to attend to. Under this arrangement the *Lögrétta* became the highest tribunal in the country whose decisions the king only could modify in certain instances; it also passed new laws whether initiated by the king or others; and these functions the Althing retained in the main unaltered down to the end of the seventeenth century. After the introduction of the absolute monarchy in Denmark and afterwards in Iceland, this institution laid its blighting hand upon the Althing as well as upon other national and political organizations; from that time the Althing steadily declined and became a mere shadow of its former self until by royal edict of June 6, 1800, it was abolished. Its functions had for the last century or so been limited almost exclusively to those of a judicial character, and to carry these on a National Superior Court was created, which was to meet in Reykjavik, the largest town in the country which was aspiring to become the capital city. The plains of Thingvellir were thus abandoned.

This action of the Danish government met with almost universal disapproval, and before three decades had passed demands were heard for the re-establishment of the Althing; these gained in force after the estates of the realm had been called together for consultation in Denmark in the year 1831. It was, however, not until King Christian VIII had ascended the throne that some steps were taken to satisfy the wishes of the Icelanders. By a royal ordinance of March 8, 1843,

the Althing was re-established as a consultative assembly, and in such capacity it first met in Reykjavik in the summer of 1845. Four years later absolutism was abolished in Denmark and a constitutional government established. The Icelanders, under the wise and consistent leadership of Jón Sigurdsson, now demanded a similar system for their own country, which met with a stubborn resistance from the Danish authorities; a long-drawn struggle followed, until nearly thirty years later King Christian IX, without consulting the Althing, gave ✓ Iceland a constitution January 5, 1874, on the occasion of the millenary of its first colonization. The legislative assembly thus established consisted of two houses with thirty members, twenty-four of whom were elected by direct balloting while six were appointed by the king. Although the king unsparingly availed himself of his power of veto with regard to the legislative Althing, this limited degree of home rule nevertheless proved of great benefit to the people. For about forty years the composition of the Althing remained virtually the same. Its power and prestige were, however, greatly enhanced, ✓ when in 1904 a special minister for Iceland was appointed with residence in Reykjavik; thereby the minister became responsible to the Althing and not to the king as before had been the case. By the ✓ Danish-Icelandic Act of November 30, 1918, Iceland became an independent kingdom in union with Denmark. This necessitated some changes in the Icelandic Constitution which were brought about by the amendments of May 18, 1920. According to these the Althing is composed of forty-four members elected by popular vote, thirty-six of whom represent constituencies, while eight are elected by the country at large. These latter are members of the Upper House, together with ✓ eight of the other representatives selected by the whole Althing in a united session. Thus the Icelanders, for better or worse, boast a full-fledged parliamentary system.

It may seem, and indeed there is a far cry from this up-to-date Althing to that of *Ulfjót*, yet by name and through political evolution it is the same institution as was inaugurated at Thingvellir one thousand years ago. The reaching of so venerable an age calls, of course, for some kind of celebration, and this is also planned by the government and the people of Iceland to take place in the summer of 1930, partly in the magnificent surroundings of the old meeting-place at Thingvellir, partly in the modern House of Parliament in Reykjavik, but the details of this unique festival have hardly as yet been fully decided upon.

Glimpses of Iceland

By THEO. FINDAHL

AMERICANS to whom I have happened to speak about Iceland have nearly always asked how to get there. By investigating the matter I have found that there is in fact no direct steamship connection between New York and Iceland. The only way to reach this curious little kingdom, geographically nearer to the United States than any other European country, is from Copenhagen via Leith, Scotland, or from Bergen, Norway. From the latter town good, modern passenger steamers sail every week. The trip from Bergen by way of Thorshavn (the principal port of the Faroe islands) to Reykjavik takes three days. Two or three weeks' stay

in the country would be sufficient to see southern Iceland, where most of her famous scenery is—even less time would do, though it would be preferable to stay as long as possible, as the country in fact is one of the most picturesque and quaint places to be found in the world.

The best starting-point for excursions to all places of interest in southern Iceland is Reykjavik, the capital. Not much time is needed for sightseeing in the town itself, Reykjavik being neither beautiful nor impressive, though it is not without its peculiar charm and interest. Viewed from a height, for instance, the hill where some years ago the citizens erected a museum for the works of Einar Jonsson, the renowned sculptor of the country, it strikes one as being a growing town, a community with a strong belief in its own future. The hill itself is

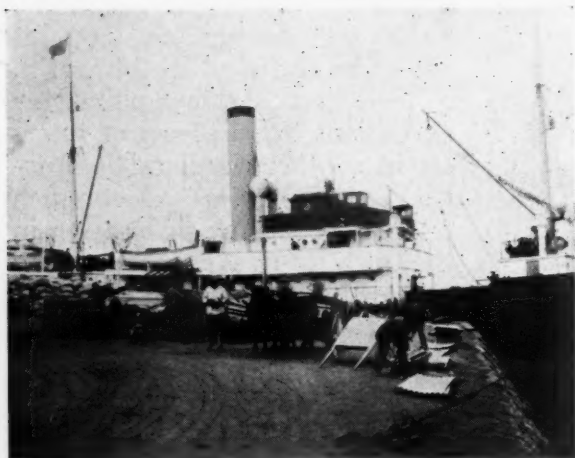


INGOLF THE FOUNDER BY EINAR JONSSON

planned to be the center of a future "Greater Reykjavik," a sort of Icelandic "Place de l'Etoile," though until now without boulevards, parks or trees; only green fields sloping gently down in all directions, with small houses scattered round about and streets not unlike coun-



THE HARBOR OF REYKJAVIK

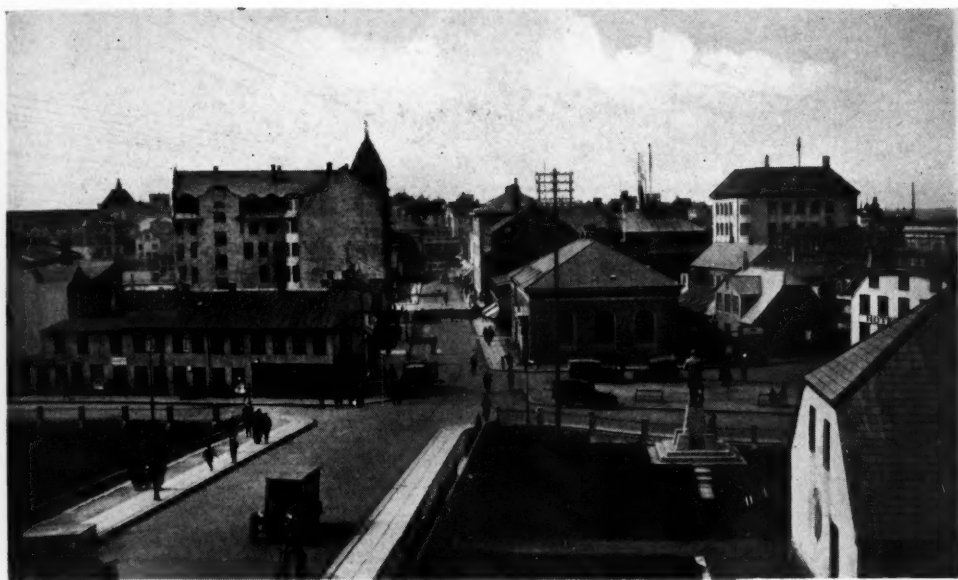
Photo by Magnusson

A MODERN TRAWLER

try roads, though carefully laid out according to a well considered plan. To the west is the fjord, a mighty bay of the Atlantic Ocean, to the south the hills slowly descending towards Hafnar fjordur (Harbor Fjord), a suburb of Reykjavik, and to the east and north the city itself with great mountains in the background, the beautiful Esja with eternal snow on its top. The vapor

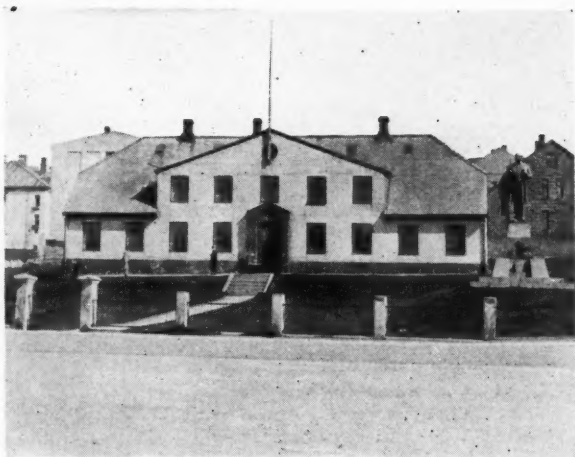
ascending from the hot springs in the inmost part of the bay have given the town its name: Reykjavik meaning "Smoking Bay."

The total aspect of Reykjavik is very much like that of a western Norwegian coastal town—say Haugesund or Stavanger. Its population now is 20,000, one-fifth that of the whole country, but the area covered is much larger than might be expected. The principal street, the Laugavegur, is just over two miles long, not much shorter than the Friedrichstrasse of Berlin! Even if you keep strictly within the

*Photo by Magnusson*

STREETS OF REYKJAVIK

borders of the town you have a chance of walking yourself tired. The business section occupies the site of old "Ingolf's tun," the farm of the first Norwegian "land-taker" in Iceland. As the viking ship of this great warrior approached the coasts of Iceland, Ingolf threw out into the sea implements for agriculture, sacred to the gods, and swore that he would build his permanent

*H. B. MacDonald*

GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN REYKJAVIK

home where the current should wash them ashore. After some years the implements were found on the shores of the bay of Reykjavik. There he accordingly built his "tun" (the same word as the English "town") which to this day has remained the center of the Icelandic capital. Now this part of Reykjavik has asphalted and neatly laid out streets and is not at all without a certain air of a capital. Though on a small scale, Reykjavik is indeed a genuine capital of a sovereign state. Iceland has had full self-government since 1918, the union

*Photo by Magnusson*

HOMES FACING THE LAKE, REYKJAVIK

*H. B. MacDonald*

REYKJAVIK FROM THE LAKE

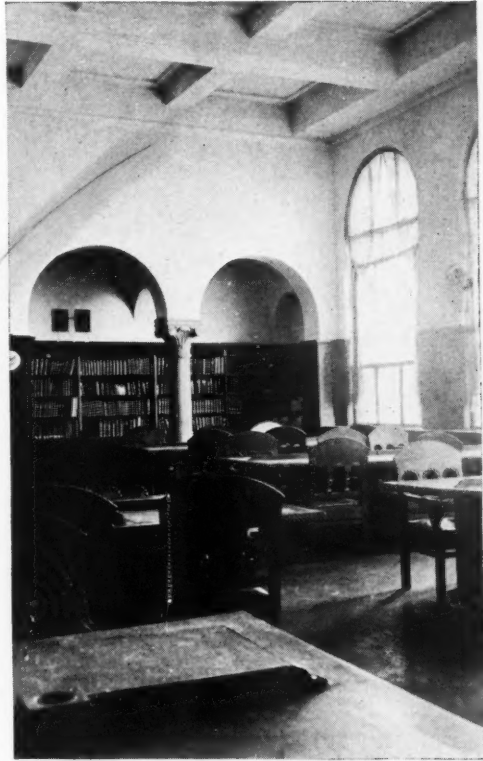
with Denmark being now a purely personal one, with only the king in common. It is indeed true that the foreign affairs of Iceland are administered from Copenhagen; but as Iceland has no army, no navy, scarcely any police force worth mentioning, and is, so to speak, open for conquest by any ill-meaning country that could dispose of one torpedo-boat

for the purpose, her foreign policy is not likely to be a very aggressive or imperialistic one. To administer her home affairs Reykjavik has her parliament, occupying the first floor of a building of which the second floor houses the university. She boasts also a cathedral (which an American might mistake for a chapel), a series of consulates from all countries of the world, even from Nicaragua and Bolivia, a Latin school, a fine hospital, several business buildings up to four stories high, and, last but not least, two picture-houses where

the products of Hollywood are shown to the descendants of the vikings. There is, however, no regular theatre and no opera. Along the walks circling a lake behind the business section smart Reykjavik has its villas. There is also a music pavilion for open-air summer concerts and at some distance the masts of Reykjavik radio may be seen rising high above a plain where just now a stadium is being constructed.

The buildings of Reykjavik are easily divided into groups from three distinctly different periods. The oldest houses, of which very few remain, are genuine peasants' dwellings with only the front covered with wood, the rest of the house looking like a mound of earth, green with moss and grass. In the country such houses give a very picturesque effect, but in a town they look singularly out of place. The next stage in the development of architecture is char-

acterized by houses covered with corrugated iron—of them Reykjavik possesses a great number, they may indeed be said to be typical of the town. As a rule they are painted, often very tastefully, so that the whole building looks as if wrapped up in some soft, striped material, a kind of waterproof cloak well fitted to keep out the rain, and not at all so ugly to behold as one might believe. Summers sometimes are very rainy, but other years they may be wonderfully warm and sunny. As a general rule, however, tourists do well in bringing with them all their rain-clothes so as to be prepared for the worst, just as the houses of Reykjavik always wear their coats of corrugated iron in case they might be needed. The newest buildings of Reykjavik are mainly made of concrete. It is very easy for a foreigner to criticize Icelandic architecture, but he may too easily forget the singular difficulties house-building meets with in this country. Lofty buildings and brick houses are on the whole to be avoided because of the strongly volcanic character of the country. As Iceland has forests no longer, all wooden materials have to be imported from abroad,



Jon Björnsson

THE READING ROOM OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY
A MODERN INTERIOR



H. B. MacDonald

A STREET IN REYKJAVIK

great enough, however, as traffic has increased more rapidly than any one had foreseen. (The town itself has grown from a population of 4,000 to 20,000 in less than a quarter of a century.) There are regular sailings by good liners to Norway, Scotland, and Denmark, and many freighters also enter the harbor. The town itself possesses a very modern fleet of trawlers, about forty ships in all, steaming restlessly up and down along the Southern coast where the richest fishing banks of the world are to be found. If anything happens to the machinery, the trawlers must go to Scotland for repair as Reykjavik has no mechanic workshop. Nor has it any railroads, though it is expecting to get one before long, the Norwegian concern "Titan" having been licensed to construct a railroad from Reykjavik to Olfus, to the best agricultural district of Iceland, south of the capital. Opinions, however, vary a great deal as to the desirability of such a line. Many maintain that Iceland had better omit the railroad-era in the history of communication and concentrate all her powers on the laying out of good roads for motor traffic. Motor cars have grown very popular in the island of Sagas and have brought about a complete revolution in

are rather expensive and accordingly used with as great economy as possible.

The harbor is the special pride of the citizens. It is all new, constructed since the Great War. Formerly ships had to anchor in the open bay, and passengers and goods had to be taken ashore in small row-boats. Now a great basin has been sheltered by a breakwater, not



H. B. MacDonald

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

the communication between town and country. Reykjavik alone has more than four hundred cars, mostly American, and regular bus-lines are operating in all directions along the main roads. Formerly the peasants used to bring their goods, wool, mutton and hay to town every autumn in long fantastic horse-caravans. Now this has come to an end, because the trucks do the work more

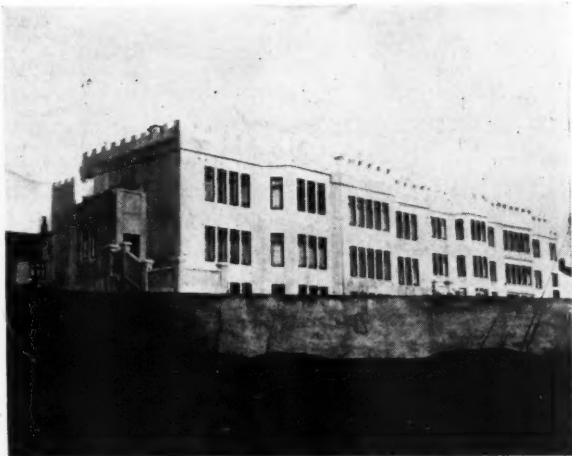
quickly and with less expense, thus wiping an old and characteristic feature out of the physiognomy of Reykjavik.

To reach holy Thingvalla, or Thingvellir as the natives term it, the first place outside of Reykjavik generally visited by tourists, takes three hours' ride by motor, through a very strange volcanic and moon-like landscape, a so-called *hraun*. The entire road is lined with great heaps of stones at intervals, *varder* from old times, because the *hrauns*, i.e., deserts with huge lavablocks peering up through the thin layer of sand, are very dangerous to cross in foggy and snowy weather. Motoring in itself is a most exciting sport in Iceland. The network of roads raying out in all directions from the northernmost capital of the world is still far from being completed. Only parts of it are even and fine. Very often most dramatic interruptions will occur: stretches of crushed stone or swamps with no crushed stone at all, gloomy deserts of sand—or maybe you have to drive right across rivers the water splashing high above the wheels of the car. Far away from town the roads often are reduced to deep ruts



H. B. MacDonald

REYKJAVIK'S CATHEDRAL



AN APARTMENT HOUSE IN REYKJAVIK



H. B. MacDonald

THE PLAIN OF THE PARLIAMENT, THINGVALLIR, SHOWING THE
HOTEL AND KING'S COTTAGE

all men") the entrance to holy Thingvalla. If you stop here a moment and walk up to the top of the hill to your right, you have a wonderful

view of the whole huge Thingvalla plain, without contradiction one of the finest sights anywhere. "It is worth while to go around the whole world to see Thingvalla," says Lord Dufferin in his classic *Letters from High Latitudes*.

Three miles broad and six miles long is this plain, three sides of it framed by wonderfully clean-cut walls of rock, as if constructed by a most skillful architect. The fourth side opens up into the great *Thingvalla-vatn*, the greatest lake of Iceland. The whole scene recalls strikingly the well known picture in the old Bible illustrated by Doré of the flight of the Jews through the Red Sea with the masses of water standing like the walls of a fortress on both sides of a dry



Photo by H. B. MacDonald
FALLS OF THINGVALLIR

strip of land where God's chosen people might walk safely and without fear. In a similar way the solid walls of Thingvalla have been standing till this day to protect this holy place of the northern race. Here is indeed the cradle of political freedom of the world and of the self-government of all nations. The meetings of the ancient chiefs

at Thingvalla to make laws and draw agreements and arbitrate became the model of the later House of Lords in England, the prototype of parliaments in the world.

Photographs give but a faint idea of the beauty of Thingvalla, always seeming to give an impression of disorder and gloom,—exactly the opposite of reality. The whole landscape seems moulded by a giant master builder, carved by a giant sculptor with proportions cleverly calculated and carefully worked out. Exactly where a decoration seems to be needed, right in the middle of one of the walls, the Oxara-fall rushes downwards. Indeed it is said to have been arranged so by human hands. Some aesthetic viking chief is supposed to have had the water directed to the point where the effect of the fall would be greatest! And gloomy? On rainy days Thingvalla certainly inspires awe with its terrible gloom, dark, stony, and wild as it then seems, with numbers of black ravens circling slowly above it. But on sunny days it is the brightest, most colorful spot to be imagined; the wide, open plain with small birches of a fresh green, the mountains in black shadows, the little white church among emerald lawns, the blue glassy Thingvalla lake, and in the background the purple, silvery and black sides of the extinct Hengil-volcanoes with smoke from hot sulphur springs rising like the incense of altars.

Just as the mountain masses along the plain are furrowed by the two enormous cracks, the Almannagja and the Hrafnagja (the cleft of the ravens) still more fantastic, half filled with huge stones under a deep velvety cover of silvery moss, the plain itself is cut by numerous minor parallel cracks. One of them is filled with icy, crystal-clear water, the white sandy bottom of which is glittering with hundreds of coins, dollars, sovereigns, marks, francs and kroner, a whole fortune



THE PARSONAGE AT THINGVALLIR

thrown there by tourists because the legend says that every one who sacrifices anything to this well will see Thingvalla once more before he dies.

At Thingvalla the motor road ends. Any one intending to penetrate farther into the country must do so on horseback. All Icelanders, including small children and old women, are good riders, accustomed to it from childhood and depending on horses to get from one farm to another. The technique of riding in Iceland is something quite different from that of other countries; skilful horsemen from abroad will be disappointed in finding but little opportunity to display their abilities, while poor riders may find consolation in the fact that, without ambition for style and appearance, they may remain passively on the back of the animal, as though sitting in a chair, and at more critical moments, across foaming rivers or along the brinks of terrible precipices simply leave the leadership to the horse, who will always prove to be, if not cleverer at least more experienced than themselves.

The Icelandic horses, or ponies, are worthy of a chapter of their own. Descendants of the so-called Fjord-race of Norwegian horses, they are of a most unpretentious appearance, small and long-haired, but with something inexplicably gentle and sympathetic about them, betraying good stock. Their difference of value is clearly expressed in the prices which vary a good deal. A fine riding horse costs about one thousand krónur, while a poor specimen is to be had for some hundred krónur. Sitting on the former is like resting in a perfectly cushioned rocking chair, while the latter is no more comfortable than a hard wooden stool. The trouble is that it is almost impossible to judge their qualities from appearance, a fact which even native experts will readily confirm. To know what kind they are, one must try them. 'The natives strongly emphasize their capacities as *vatnahestar*, "water-horses," for their readiness to cross the wild rivers

which are frequently met in Iceland. Not too much stress can be put on the importance of having a good horse for a trip through Iceland. A bad horse will make this a trial and a hardship while a good-tempered animal will turn it into one of the greatest pleasures a traveler may experience. For longer trips it is advisable for each individual to hire



From Iceland in Moving Pictures
A CARAVAN OF HAYING TIME



Photo by Magnusson

AN ICELANDIC NIAGARA, GODAFOSS

two horses. As the ordinary rent for a horse is five krónur a day, and as a guide also will be indispensable and has to be paid ten krónur a day, it will be understood that traveling in Iceland cannot at all be said to be cheap.

A very curious thing about Icelandic ponies is their command of a greater repertory of steps than their foreign colleagues. Besides the walk, the trot and the gallop, they also do the *skeid*—camel-steps, moving both left legs and both right legs at a time, a gait known in America as pacing. Still more complicated is the *tölt*—a word that cannot be translated. It is a kind of tripping trot, a series of very short and quick steps, but instead of putting down the right foreleg and the left hindleg simultaneously the horses “syncopate” it. If shown in slow motion pictures, one would see that the horse has one foot on the ground and three in the air at the same time! The sounds of the hoofs are heard twice as rapidly as in the ordinary trot. *Tölt* can also be varied and differently executed. It is considered the very finest achievement of the riding school, because the slight and rapid movements prevent the rider from feeling any jerks. Ability to do the *tölt* raises the price of a horse considerably. It is not rare to find farms in Iceland with more than a hundred horses and still more sheep, but with only a few cows. Great numbers of the ponies are exported, mostly to England, to be used in the coal pits, a tragic change from existence in their native land where they enjoy a liberty rarely bestowed on domestic animals. They are practically never put



From Iceland in Moving Pictures
SKOGAFOSS, A FALL OF ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE FEET

in a stable, even in town they stroll freely along the streets during their hours of leisure. They never get oats, their only food being grass, which, however, attains an extraordinarily high-grade quality in the damp atmosphere of Iceland.

Of the Geysir plain, one day's ride from Thingvalla, it also may be said that photographs give but a very poor idea of the scenery, showing just a monotonous gray plain without background, and with a white patch of clouds drifting above it. No camera can tell anything about the quaint reddish-yellow color of the sand, of the hissings and explosions of subterranean springs, of the swiftly moving clouds of steam from 150 or 200 hot springs, which together

make this part of the Haukadalur (Hawk's Valley) such a marvelous picture. And yet the Hawk's Valley to-day is nothing to what it formerly has been, not so sensationally impressive as writers of by-gone days have described it. The whole subterranean volcanic system of the valley is in a state of decadence, slowly but inevitably approaching its final extinguishment. First of all this applies to the Great Geysir, which though not the biggest is yet the most famous hot spring of the world and the one that has given name to a whole class. In its best period it spouted almost two hundred feet in the air, and still most pictures will represent it richly adorned with clouds of steam and monumental cascades of water. To be genuine such pictures must be at least 10 years old, so many years have passed since the last eruption of the spring. Now it lies there, quiet and silent, but none-the-less beautiful to behold, its circular basin (65 feet in diameter) brimful of blue, pure almost boiling water. Over its sur-

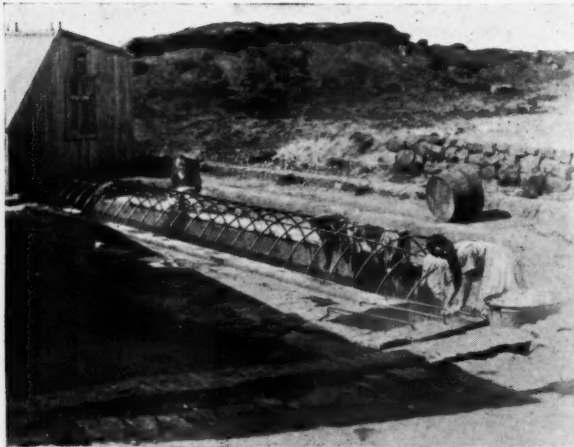
face eternal clouds of vapor are drifting gently to and fro, as from mysterious depths great bubbles slowly ascend to the surface where they burst. . . . Equally beautiful is the *Blesi* or the "Spectacles" as some name it from its resemblance to a pair of spectacles: two round ponds, divided by a narrow bridge of sand, just broad enough to let one person cross at a time. Nearly all travel-writers describing Blesi compare it to the blue grotto of Capri near Naples, its mysteriously deep waters being of the same hue of incomparably pure and strong blue. None of the minor springs that nowadays entertain tourists in the Hawk's Valley can be compared to these two dethroned queens,

though some of them are not to be despised and at least three of them even deserve the term "star" in the film language. The *Stjarna*, the *Strokkur*, the *Sísjódandi*, throw columns of scalding hot water 35 feet up into the air at short intervals, still not often enough for tourists in a hurry and hungry for sensations. Therefore a very efficient system of teasing the springs into giving extra performances (and at popular prices) has been invented. By throwing a few pounds of soap into the spring it will almost immediately start spluttering and spitting as if to vomit the irritating soapy water as quickly as possible, and after a few minutes the crisis is reached and the eruption takes place. Some far-seeing guide-books recommend tourists to bring a supply of soap along from Reykjavik, because prices have risen to exorbitant heights in the Hawk's Valley in consequence of the great demand for the article! The Great Geysir, however, does not pay any attention to such low tricks. When the king of Denmark and Iceland last



Photo by Magnusson

GULLFOSS, THE FAMOUS GOLDEN FALL



H. B. MacDonald
THE COMMUNITY LAUNDRY, A HOT SPRING NEAR
REYKJAVIK

kinds of indigestible things into them. Is it really possible that tourist traffic can influence the order of nature so deeply? Can indeed any human force extinguish volcanic forces? It sounds more probable when others tell that the actual quiet of the springs is due to subterranean changes in consequence of the latest earthquakes that have shaken the country. To bring the springs into life again a "counter-earthquake" is needed, they say.

The Geysir plain contains the greatest hot springs of Iceland but only a small part of the hundreds and hundreds scattered all about the country. Just outside Reykjavik there are two fairly large ones, though tame and civilized. One of them serves as a laundry and the water from the second is mixed with that from a cold spring into a swimming pool of about 100 degrees. Certainly unique in its kind is this swimming pool, simply surrounded by a fence of corrugated iron, for even in winter the air is so mild from the steam of the water that one may undress in the open air. Both on days for ladies and for gentlemen the pool is crowded with people of all social strata, admission being entirely gratis. Some municipal authorities maintain that it is a waste of values thus to offer a hot bath gratis to anybody coming along. There are plans to lead the water into great hothouses, where roses and carnations, tomatoes and artichokes might blossom forth in tropical splendor, and give a touch of exotic beauty to life in these high latitudes as well as a wholesome change in the somewhat monotonous diet of the Icelanders. Others would prefer to have the water directed into a great boiler of a common steam-heating system for the whole city. The factions have not been able to come to any agreement, which may explain why until now nothing at all has been done.

time visited his Atlantic kingdom, whole carloads of soap were thrown into the clear waters of the Geysir. A little more steam, a little groaning—that was the whole result. Just as serenely and coolly as it looks at you and me, it looked into the faces of the King and the whole court.

Some Icelanders have told me that tourists are to be blamed for the destruction of the hot springs by throwing all

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Not all hot springs of Iceland contain pure water. Sometimes the water is mixed with clay into a gray soup or an offensive porridge as in the so-called mud-volcanoes of which the country possesses a great number. Most of them are found in Northern Iceland, in the Nama mountains (Nama meaning sulphur springs). The Namahlidar is perhaps the most fantastic part of all Iceland, a true valley of death and terror, where volumes of thick smoke following the frequent eruptions of mud-volcanoes threaten to choke riders and horses.



GLACIERS AND MOUNTAINS

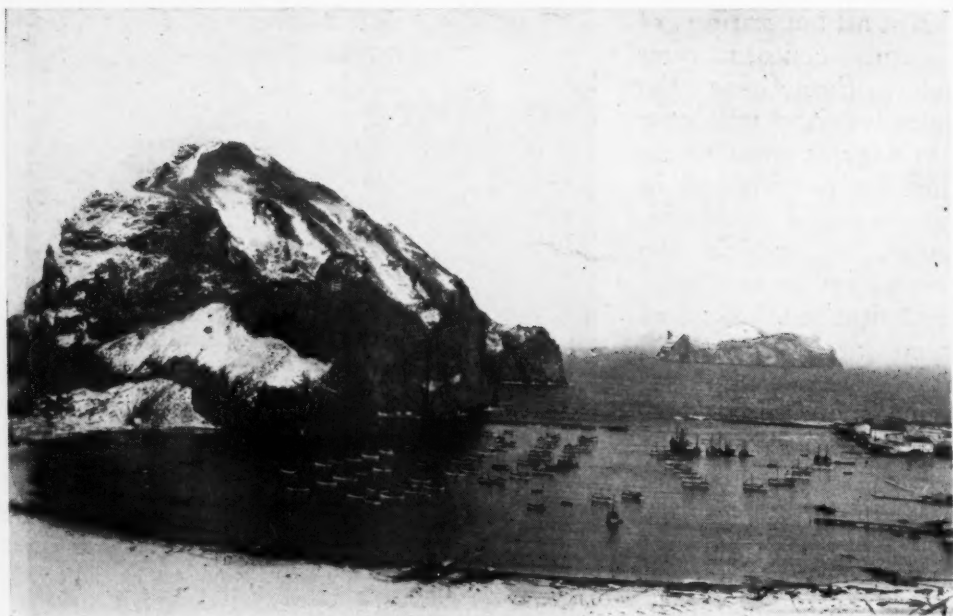


Photo by Magnusson

A DISTANT WALL OF ICE

People naturally expect to find volcanoes and hot springs in the same districts, which is precisely not the case. Hot springs are understood to be the last stage of volcanic activity and occur in places that formerly have had volcanoes—semi-volcanic as they are termed by savants. The volcanoes of Iceland, spread round about the country, 130 in all, are not pyramid-shaped, but formed like flat cupolas, a type altogether different from other European volcanoes. The world famous Hekla, the most active of them all, is a long row of hills with numbers of craters along its sides. Katla is still bigger, and deep in the middle of the country lies the mysterious Askja, that had a fearful eruption in 1922. Nobody quite knows what really happened on that occasion, for not a single human being has penetrated so far into the country since then. So unknown is Iceland! The great volcanoes in the North, the Helviti (Hell) and the Krafla, have had no eruptions since the eighteenth century, so we do not know whether to reckon them among the active or not.

Active or inactive, dead or alive, all volcanoes of Iceland are outwardly cold, hidden under heavy masses of snow and the biggest



From Iceland in Moving Pictures

VESTMANNAEYJAR, WESTMAN ISLES

glaciers of Europe. Without feathers of smoke in their hats like those adorning Stromboli and Aetna, with no eternally flaming skysign like that of Vesuvius advertising Naples to the tourists, the volcanoes of Iceland simply are there, silent and terrible. One of them has even been so prudent as to hide itself under water. Just off Cape Reykjanes it lies, like a horrible submarine, loaded with explosives, in its mysterious concealment and threatening silence a more frightful symbol of the incurable unsafety of this globe than all the loud and fiery Italians put together.

Thingvalla, Geysir and in its neighborhood the marvelous Golden Fall, Gullfoss, are the great scenic features of Southern Iceland. But why only follow the beaten track? Why not ride away to unknown places, still more beautiful? I should suggest the Lidarende, the Torsmark.

Lovers of nature can have no greater thrills than riding across the wide plains, through the narrow valleys of Iceland, amidst the weirdest, most imposing scenery of Europe. Fresh breezes from the sea, the song of birds, the sound of many waterfalls, green plains, black mountains, white glaciers, great lakes where the wild swans are swimming, but not one factory, not one railway station, not one motor car, only farms now and then, miles and miles apart from one another. A country of repose, of dreams, of contemplation, one of the forgotten byways of the great world.



SEYDISFJÖRDUR IN WINTER

The principal farms of Iceland still lie on the sites chosen by the vikings of Norway who left their native country in the ninth century because King Harold Fairhair had hurt their savage sense of liberty by gaining too much power for himself and imposing taxes upon them. When their ships reached the shores of Iceland, however, they did not come to a country uninhabited by men. Irish monks lived there in monasteries and hermitages, without women, without a future, only to worship God amidst a majestic scenery. The entire country was just one great temple. With the Norwegian vikings life came to Iceland, a red-blooded, savage race that chased the pale monks out of the country and built homes of strong timber around which fierce fights were fought for power, for the love of women and the honor of men, just like the feudal fights around the castles of Middle Europe.

The Sagas, the tales of bygone days, are not yet forgotten and many of the peasants trace their pedigree back to the Norse viking kings, but now everything is quiet and peaceful about the farms, which lie there full of memories and dreams. To live for some time at such a farm around which the breeze from the sea has blown for centuries and where the same family has lived generation after generation is a wonderful experience to the tired man of the modern world. But it is an experience not likely to be much sought by the ordinary tourist, there is no fun, no comfort—short beds, simple food,

not a bathroom in these historic dwellings! Such an existence can appeal only to the rare individual who is capable of appreciating complete relaxation, repose, and the great calm of nature.

How long will this state of things last? Is Iceland going to remain a purely rustic country with a peasant civilization or is she going to modernize, to "Americanize" herself? That is in fact the great problem of Iceland today. There are people violently opposed to the possible industrializing of the country. They do not want the water power to be utilized. They fear immigration on a larger scale because they think that a small nation like the Icelandic would risk being totally blotted out, that the language would be corrupted, and that all national characteristics would be lost. Against them are the progressive party, the inhabitants of the towns (besides Reykjavik, Akureyri and Siglufjörður in the North may be termed so) maintaining that Icelandic civilization cannot go on forever being purely literary and contemplative, but must also be technically and economically developed. Just as the country got her full political independence in 1918 (her constitution is of 1874) she must win an economic independence by utilizing her material resources, and must further develop the work begun in 1885 when the "Landsbanken" (National Bank) was founded and the Danish monopoly of commerce was put to an end. Since then progress has indeed been very considerable, conditions being taken into account. In 1874 Iceland had one wooden bridge, four stone churches, one chapel, one palace for the governor, one Latin school, and one prison, but not a single piece of road, not a single lighthouse, no ships but rowboats, no other future for enterprising youth than to become a farmer or to serve a farmer. Now roads to the cost of 8 million krónur have been built, and there are lighthouses along the whole coast. There are good schools, and sanitary conditions have been very much improved. On the whole the economic conditions of the country may be said to be very sound, no extreme wealth, but on the other hand no poverty. Industrialism has started in the fisheries which are now operated on thoroughly modern and scientific lines and yield a very substantial surplus. Even agriculture shows signs of modernizing, the farmers beginning to export shiploads of frozen meat to England. But still no genuine industrialism, in the American sense of the word, has come into existence. Is it to be desired? The progressive party most emphatically declares "yes"—but the peasant far away and the eccentric tourist, in search of things rare and exquisite, in the depths of their souls secretly hope that it will never come.

Home Life in Iceland

By THORSTINA JACKSON

THE unfortunate connotation of the name Iceland is responsible for most of the misconceptions that are prevalent regarding the island and its inhabitants. Few realize that the friendly Gulf Stream modifies the climate to such an extent that the extreme cold of the north-central states and Canada is quite unknown, and that in the southern part of the island there is seldom enough snow for skiing or skating. Furthermore, science has penetrated to that remote land and connected it with the rest of the world by a cable and a steamship line and furnished it with such conveniences and amusements of modern life as electric lights, the automobile, radio and moving pictures. It is how-



BERGTHORSHVOL ON THE SITE OF NJAL'S HOME

ever only a few years since Iceland was isolated and the natives were forced to depend largely on their own ingenuity for most of the essentials of life. Then the home was the chief center of industry, supplying ninety per cent of the needs of the family. Present day inventions, to be sure, have altered this situation somewhat, but many of the time-honored characteristics of the Icelandic home are still preserved, more particularly in the country districts.

The Norse settlers of Iceland brought with them a type of domestic architecture which, though considerably altered, still prevails in the majority of farm homes. The walls are built of alternate layers of turf and stone, and are usually about six feet thick. The front of the house is finished with boards on the outside, topped by from four to seven gables which are usually painted white. In the summer time these white gables offer an attractive contrast to the green sod roof and the walls. Here and there daisies and other native flowers peep forth out of the cracks and crevices. The Icelandic farm house or "baer" comprises, under the same roof not only living quarters for the family but also shelter for the livestock, the abode of the latter being separated from the human dwelling only by a narrow passage.

The main entrance to the building is in the center of the front



Photo by Bardur Sigurdsson
THE FAMILY HEARS THE SAGAS READ

of the house and on either side are the gabled walls of the parlor, living room, store-room, and smithy. The main door opens into a long narrow passage, extending frequently the entire length of the building, and from which are entrances to the various rooms. The parlor, or *Stofa*, generally comes first along the hallway. It is, in most cases, a pleasant room with walls of unpainted boards. Beautiful plants, tenderly nursed by the housewife, are invariably found in the windows, while on

chest and table stand rows of framed photographs of relatives and friends and the departed. Colorful rugs, often of dyed sheepskin, are scattered around the floor. There is a marked absence of glaring or flashy colors; it is as if the color scheme within the homes were in harmony with the beautiful blending of tints that is such a factor in the mystic loveliness of Icelandic scenery.

The living room, or *baostofa*, is the most important room in the house. It is long and narrow and along the walls stand the beds for the women of the household, while at one end the bedroom of the farmer and his wife is partitioned off and at the other is the room set aside for the children. The very pulse of Icelandic home life is to be found in this *baostofa*. It is there that the family assembles during the dark winter afternoons and evenings, each person with his or her appointed task: the women spin, knit, sew and weave, while the men card wool or busy themselves over their tools. One

person, the reader of the household, occupies the seat of honor under the light. He reads aloud the old Norse Sagas and Eddas, or perhaps from some modern books, native and foreign. Many Icelandic homes boast a large number of English books as well as the Icelandic and Danish. The reader is often so well versed in the latter language that he can translate it at sight with very little hesitation. Sometimes the entertainer sings one of the numerous Icelandic ballads and the audience joins in the re-

frain, the women working their spinning wheels in time to the tune. It is in the *baostofa* that the Icelandic children receive the most effective instruction in the classics of their country, and it is rare indeed to find a farmer boy who has not read the Sagas and Eddas at the age of twelve. The influence of this reading is very noticeable in the ordinary speech of the children which is singularly pure and free from slang. Iceland, indeed, knows no dialects, and when the scholar wished to express himself in the purest classical Icelandic he endeavors to copy the ordinary diction of the farmer, for nowhere is the language as pure and free from foreign innovations as in the country districts. Here it is that the many hours of reading in the *baostofa* bear fruit.

The average Icelandic farmer's wife, of whom, as the center of the home we must give some account, leads an existence no less busy



Photo by Bardur Sigurdsson
A CHRISTMAS TREE. THE VIEW FROM THE FARMHOUSE DOOR IS
PAINTED ON A SHEET BEHIND THE CHILDREN



Photo by Bardur Sigurdsson

AN ICELANDIC FAMILY, A STUDY IN CHARACTER

than that of her sisters in other lands. She not only supervises the food and clothing of her family and the management of her home, but also has charge of the education of her children until they reach the high school age, though to be sure she is assisted somewhat in this task by a tutor who goes from house to house, staying some six weeks at each home. The fact that in Iceland children enter high school at the same age and as well prepared as in this country is a striking testimony to the ability and devotion of the Icelandic mothers as teachers.

From the Saga time to the present, the Icelandic matron has always enjoyed a free hand in the management of her home, but it was not until the middle of the last century that the women of this little island began to demand certain public rights. In 1847 the inheritance law making women equal heirs with men was passed, and in 1874 the first Woman's College was established at Reykjavik. The twentieth century has witnessed the culmination of the feminist movement: in 1911 women were granted the right of practicing all professions and made eligible to all state offices, and in 1915 full suffrage was granted them by the government. In spite of the discouraging difficulties of

communication, Icelandic women are well organized. They maintain a central federation with headquarters in Reykjavik in which representatives from all the organizations in the country have a seat.

The great majority of Icelandic women, of course, are engaged in the business of home-making, for as yet the country has no great industries to offer employment as stenographers or clerks nor do the different professions attract a large number of women. The daughters in a family for the most part remain at home until they marry, or they seek employment in other homes. Since the war the fisheries have attracted a considerable number of girls to the coast towns.

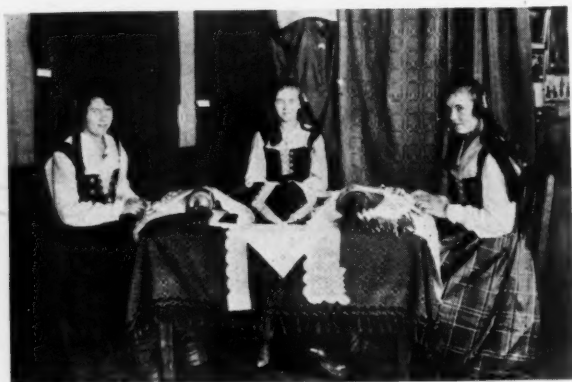
Judged by the flapper standards of present-day America the Icelandic girl is probably somewhat old-fashioned. A very important part of her education and her training for life consists of a thorough course in her mother's kitchen. To be a successful wife and mother,



THE DIGNIFIED NATIONAL DRESS



A SOUTHERN HOMESTEAD, SHOWING A HOT SPRING AND
A WATERFALL IN THE BACKGROUND



YOUTHFUL LACEMAKERS, WITH A DISPLAY OF HANDICRAFTS
ON THE WALL BEHIND THEM



A WEDDING PARTY

Icelandic standards demand that she be a good cook, understanding how to prepare meat and fish in a variety of ways, how to make the delicious soups for which the Northern nations are so justly famed and above all, how to brew that favorite beverage of the nation—coffee. She must be adept, too, at using milk which forms such an important part of the diet of the Icelanders in the form of cheese and *skyr*, a concoction of curdled milk, cream, and sugar which is the ice cream of the Icelanders. The Icelandic maid must be no less skillful in the use of the needle than in the arts of cooking. Sewing, knitting, spinning and weaving must be second nature to her, and every ambitious girl is skilled at beautiful fancy work—at hardanger and lace work and the exquisite embroidery on the national costumes.

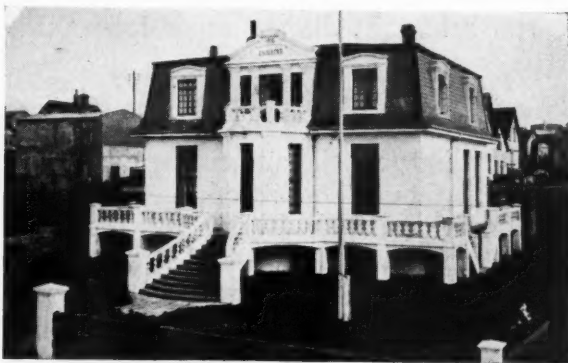
Possibly the Icelandic girl has a craving for other forms of self-expression than these domestic ones, and is disturbed by psychoses and complexes which have become so familiar to us since the War; but if she is, she hides such emo-

tions under a very calm and happy manner. She looks upon marriage as a very serious business and exerts herself to make a success of it. No doubt Icelandic husbands and wives have their difficulties and the course of true love does not always run smoothly, but there is a very marked and widespread sentiment of loyalty between married couples of this country which makes them loath to discuss their difficulties in the divorce courts or with their neighbors.

There have been numerous changes in the Icelandic homesteads during the last few years, some making for improvement, others for the contrary. In some instances the Icelanders have been, perhaps, somewhat over eager in adopting foreign customs and discarding their own. This deplorable tendency is especially marked in recent domestic architecture, the style of many new houses, both in town and country, being far less dignified and colorful than were the old homesteads. The square box-like cement structures that many of the farmers have erected strike a particularly discordant note. They quite lack the friendliness of the old *baeir* with their attractive gables so admirably suited to the peaked mountains of the country. To quote Dr. Sigurdur Nordal, Professor of Norse Literature at the University of Iceland, "The old gabled homesteads seem to have grown naturally out of the Icelandic soil, while the cement boxes appear as if somebody left them by mistake."



A MODERN INTERIOR



A MODERN HOME



Photo by Magnusson
THE OLD HOUSE AND THE NEW

To be sure the old fashioned walls of turf and stone as well as the sod roofs are very impractical, and are incapable of resisting the heavy rains of the country for any great length of time. But the characterless buildings that have, in so many instances, replaced them, aroused such a storm

of criticism that architects have worked out plans to preserve the external appearance, the color and beauty of the old houses without their disadvantages and discomforts. The solution to the problem has been found in the use of more durable material such as cement, and the Icelandic government is now building on the site of Njal's home at Bergthorshvol, a large edifice, using this material for construction but preserving the native domestic architecture.

There is a widespread interest, both at home and abroad, in the water power of Iceland, that sleeping giant with the strength of four millions horsepower, of which only four thousand are utilized at the present time. Many people have learned the advantages of electricity for heating, lighting and cooking, and a number of farmers have made their own installations for these purposes. Almost every home in Iceland, indeed, is situated not far from some mountain brook or waterfall that might be used as a generator of electricity.

The radio is another modern innovation that appeals very much to Icelanders, both for practical purposes and for entertainment. Some of the receiving stations to be found in the country are very satisfactory indeed: the writer heard, in one evening, excellent programs from London, Paris, and Cologne, with remarkable distinctness, and just after midnight dinner music from New York City was wafted into the room.

Although Iceland is thus quite up-to-date in its enjoyment of the material advances of the twentieth century, it shows no signs of participation in the social and economic unrest which obtains so widely at the present time. The little island is still a country of no great extremes in poverty and wealth: the difference between the employer and the employe is not so wide that they have ceased to take a personal interest in each other's welfare. It is safe to say that there is not an individual in Iceland who cannot, with little difficulty get his three meals a day and a tolerably comfortable bed for the night. This kingdom of an hundred thousand inhabitants is more or less of a family.

Arts and Letters

Five Brief Notes

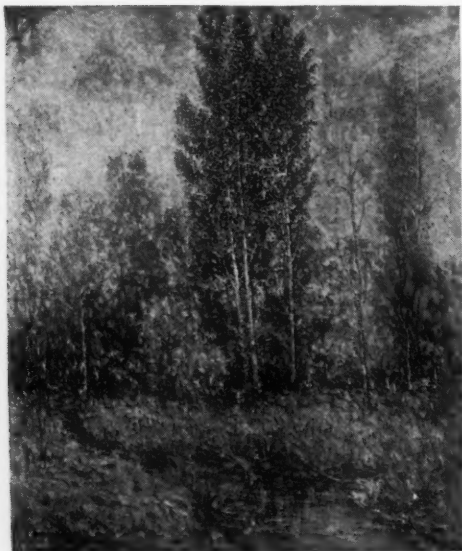


ROOSEVELT'S HAUNTS, BY EMILÉ WALTERS IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, WASHINGTON

Emilé Walters

THE COUNTRY of Skagafjördur in the northern part of Iceland has had many associations with literature and the arts since the distant days when Grettir the Strong waged there his last grim conflict. It was from that country that Pall Walters and his wife, Björg Jonsdóttir, came a generation ago to Winnipeg where their artist

son, Emilé Walters, was born. Out of an Icelandic community that was just emerging from the pioneer period of the log cabin, Emilé Walters made his way to the centers of art in Chicago and New York and to a reputation more than national at an early age. His canvases are to be seen today in the Brooklyn Museum, the Los Angeles Museum, the



SILVERY MORNING IN THE COLLECTION OF DR.
DAVID ALLAN ANDERSON

Fogg Museum of Harvard University, the Museum of Rouen in France, the National Gallery of Washington, and the National Gallery of Iceland, the last named of which has acquired four of his paintings representing the four seasons. He has also exhibited in the Tate Galleries of London. Among honors won by him is the J. Francis Murphy Memorial Prize of the National Academy of Design. His paintings frequently have in them the lights and shadows of early morning or evening; and, although he is at home in all seasons, his preference seems to be for snow and blossoms.

Iceland's Pioneer Composer

THE Icelander is passionately fond of good music. Hundreds of melodious folksongs have for generations been a cherished heritage of the Icelandic people. The writing of larger musical composition is, neverthe-

less, a new development in the realm of Icelandic art.

Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson was Iceland's first great composer. His genius was revealed in 1874 when he wrote the music for the national anthem *God of our land*. It is a masterpiece. Instantly it won the heart of the Icelandic nation. For this work alone Sveinbjörnsson would be remembered as long as the Icelandic language is spoken. But he wrote many other noble pieces.

A fearless pioneer in his art, Sveinbjörnsson dedicated his whole life to it. Despite adverse public opinion, he chose an artist's career. He studied under famous masters in Denmark and Germany. Then, for nearly half a century, he taught music in Edinburgh. His creative urge was, however, not to be denied. He devoted every spare hour to musical composition; and he was extremely productive and fertile in ideas. He wrote numerous pieces of vocal and instrumental music. His compositions were published in English during the years he lived in Edinburgh. Many of his vocal numbers won great favor in England and Iceland, for he interprets masterfully the thought of a poem; nowhere, indeed, is his artistic insight better revealed than in some of his accompaniments. Of Sveinbjörnsson's larger compositions—and there are several—the cantata written in honor of the visit of King Frederik the VIII to Iceland in 1907 is particularly noteworthy. It is a work of great merit, powerful and dignified.

Seated at his piano, Sveinbjörnsson died on the 23d of last February, nearly eighty years old. His was a life of noble achievements. He greatly enriched his people; he blazed a trail; he brought much fame to his country; he won many high honors, including the greatest of all: the love and the gratitude of his whole nation.

R. B



DYING CLEOPATRA BY NINA SAEMUNDSSON

An Icelandic Sculptress

THE SCULPTURE of Nina Saemundsson was first shown in America a year ago in the Art Center in New York, and it was remarked at the time that her work showed a basically Greek conception of form and modern simplicity in expression. Both these qualities however are to be found in another ancient civilization, the Icelandic, for Miss Saemundsson comes from a part of Iceland renowned in song and saga, the country of the Njals-saga. She has received her education in art in Copenhagen, Paris, and Rome; and in her quest for subjects she has gone far afield from her native Iceland, even to Tunis and among the Arabs. She first exhibited at the Royal Academy of Copenhagen after only one year of technical instruction. Later in the Salon du Paris her figure "Mother Love" re-

ceived unusual praise, and she was elected a member of the Société au Grand



Vang Studio

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON SITS FOR A PORTRAIT

Palais. At her studio in New York several persons of distinction have sat for her, among them Fannie Hurst and Vilhjalmur Stefansson.



CHESTER HJORTUR THORDARSON

A Celebrated Library

AMONG PRIVATE libraries in America, many authorities consider that of Chester Hjortur Thordarson of Chicago to be one of the most interesting. The fourteen thousand volumes, composed chiefly of works of English literature and natural science, represent a devotion to letters not unusual among those who look back to the saga-lands as to a homeland. Mr. Thordarson can list in the catalogue of his books many rare volumes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and an exceptional collection of books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrated, as was then the custom, by charmingly hand-colored plates. His

Icelandic collection too is remarkably complete and there are to be found in it two hundred volumes treating of travel in Iceland.

The owner of this library was a very small member of the group of immigrants from Iceland who came to Milwaukee in 1873. Thirty-one years later he was receiving the Gold Medal at the St. Louis Exposition for the invention of the first million-volt transformer; and his patents for inventions in the field of electricity are to-day numerous in America and in other countries. Since the days of meagre income, he has steadily added to the library that was begun modestly then.

A Fellow to Iceland

DURING the academic year that is just closing the American-Scandinavian Foundation has had one of its Fellows in Iceland, Mr. George Sherman Lane of Iowa State University whose studies at Reykjavik have been devoted to Old Norse and comparative linguistics. A sound knowledge of Icelandic, ancient and modern, is essential to a comparative study of linguistics and, of course, that knowledge is to be had in Iceland. The year there has also given Mr. Lane an opportunity to begin work on his doctoral thesis on the *Magus Saga* of the fourteenth century which is related to Old French and Celtic sources. Now that his year in Iceland is expiring, Mr. Lane has been named a Fellow of the American Field Service for continued studies in France. It is only because of lack of funds that the Foundation does not annually send students to or bring them from Iceland, as with the other Scandinavian countries. The day may be expected when persons interested in Iceland will help the Foundation constantly to renew by the exchange of students the intellectual associations between America and Iceland.

CURRENT EVENTS



U · S · A ·

¶ The veto of the McNary-Haugen Farm Relief Bill by President Coolidge, and the sustaining of the veto by the United States Senate, are believed by old-time politicians to constitute an important factor in the coming Presidential election. Republican leaders are considerably concerned over the possible effects on the success of the party in November. The farm element of the middle-west and northwest is insistent that some measure of relief be accorded agriculture. ¶ The compromise revenue measure was adopted by the Senate before adjournment after elimination of the provision for publicity of income tax returns, the bill cutting taxes \$222,000,000. This is about \$20,000,000 in excess of the "safety limit" fixed by Secretary Mellon. ¶ An outstanding event in the progress of commercial aviation in the United States was the organizing of the Transcontinental Air Transport, Inc., with leading railroads interested in using airplanes in connection with the railroads of the country. In a formal statement issued by General W. W. Atterbury, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the belief is expressed that the time is ripe for the inauguration of safe and convenient passenger airplanes in the United States supplementing rail facilities. The appointment of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh as chairman of the technical committee of the Air Transport company brings to the \$5,000,000 corporation one whose experience and exploits have the full confidence of the American public. ¶ In various addresses Charles E. Hughes, who was chairman of the American delegation to the Havana Conference of American Republics characterized as "fantastic" the views

held in some quarters that the United States is seeking to dominate Latin America. The resolution adopted at Havana for an arbitration conference in Washington offers a means, in his opinion, greatly to strengthen the friendship between the nations of the western world.

¶ A complaint was issued by the Federal Trade Commission against the Radio Corporation of America, the commission taking exception to Article 9 of the license agreement in which the other manufacturers agree that in selling radio sets made under the corporation's patents they will supply them with the corporation's tube. This it is claimed will "substantially lessen competition."

¶ The Methodist Episcopal Conference, at its meeting in Kansas City, Mo., unfrocked Bishop Anthon Bast of Copenhagen, finding him guilty of all charges of which he was convicted by the secular court in Copenhagen. The Conference turned him over to the Danish annual conference for support. ¶ Henry Ford was the recipient of the Cresson Medal presented by the Franklin Institute "in consideration of his rare inventive ability and power of organization." The Franklin Medal, the highest award of the Institute, was presented to Dr. Charles F. Brush, inventor of the arc light. ¶ Plans for linking North and South America by a radio telephone system similar to that which is now in operation across the Atlantic Ocean are being formulated by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. The start will be made with an intercontinental short-wave radio service between New York and Buenos Aires. ¶ Conferences in 48 states to help the United States decide in favor of anti-war treaties with other countries will be held between now and the next session of Congress under the auspices of nine national organizations containing 12,000,-

000 women, according to the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War. ¶ Contracts for utilizing the electric talking system in the production of motion pictures have been signed by leading producers with Electric Research Products, Inc.



DENMARK

¶ The final reorganization of the Landmands Bank through the cooperation of the Government with the main political parties calls for a preferential capital of 70,000,000 kroner. The writing off of the former capital of 10,000,000 kroner and of the Reserve Fund of the National Bank in the Landmands Bank, is believed will prove one of the stabilizing features of the new administration. The Government takes over for its own account 50,000,000 kroner in capital stock which, however, is to be disposed of at a later date. The stock is to pay a dividend of 5 per cent until 1931. The State guaranty is to continue until 1932. A loan of from \$50,000,000 to \$55,000,000 is to be amortized in from 30 to 33 years. ¶ Plans for the new National Museum have been approved by both houses of the Rigsdag and it has been decided to utilize the present location of the museum in the Prince's Palace. The cost of reconstruction is placed at about 6,000,000 kroner, the nation's outlay to be reduced by 2,500,000 kroner, secured through public subscription. ¶ Agitation among the farmers of Jutland for legislation which they claim is necessary to their continued welfare has taken the form of a concerted movement reaching from the southern frontier to the Skaw. Committees have been appointed to lay the grievances before the Rigsdag when it assembles in the autumn. The claim is made that a crisis has arrived in Jutland agriculture. ¶ To bring about more cordial relations between the Danes and the Germans residing across the Slesvig

border a meeting was held in Kiel where leading men of both countries voiced their desire for a better understanding of the problems confronting the people of South Jutland and Slesvig. The first Danish-German Peace Day, as it was called, was addressed by H. P. Hanssen who as representative of the Slesvig interests in the German Reichstag during the war remained the able champion of his Danish constituents in the face of many difficulties. ¶ The fiftieth anniversary of the Danish High School Union was observed by a large gathering in the Sports House, in Copenhagen, Thorvald Poulsen, member of the Folketing surveying the history of the high school in its effect on the people throughout the country districts of Denmark. ¶ A unique honor has been conferred on the Danish scientist, Mrs. Lis Jacobsen, by the Sorbonne University in inviting her to deliver a series of lectures on Runic interpretation. A section of Scandinavian research was established at the Sorbonne some years ago. ¶ The artistic expedition which is to present Greenland and its people in a series of paintings is under the supervision of the noted painter, Emanuel Petersen. Another expedition which left on the steamer *Hans Egede* included noted scientists in charge of Captain Riis-Carstensen. ¶ A. W. Sandberg, the Danish film director, has terminated his relations with the German branch of the First National Films Company. His future plans include the filming of Sophus Michaelis' "A Wedding During the French Revolution," in which the film star, Karina Bell, will take the leading part. ¶ After more than ten years' discussion regarding the need of a double-scene for the Royal Danish Theatre, the Rigsdag accepted the suggestion of the Minister of Traffic, M. Stensballe, for a combination Radio and Theatre building in accordance with the plan of Architect Holger Jacobsen. There appears, however, to be some dis-

satisfaction with the announced project, and the authorities have expressed their willingness to hear arguments favoring some other plans. ¶ In honor of the Rebuild festivities the Danish Association for the Conservation of Nature has published a handsomely illustrated work about the Rebuild National Park and the Rold Woods. The photography is the work of Sigurd Werner and the text has been written by Johannes V. Jensen and Poul Lorentzen.



NORWAY

¶ The Storting on April 28 by a large majority (84 to 64 votes) ratified the Government's decision regarding the return to gold parity as from May 1. The opposition consisted of the Labour parties and three deputies, belonging to the Farmers' Party. The bourgeois bloc of the Storting was thus practically unanimous in supporting the Government. ¶ The Government has decided that in future no person shall obtain employment in any Government department without being able to write Landsmaal, the neo Norse language. This decision is a natural result of previous resolutions of the Storting, proclaiming Landsmaal to be on an equal footing with Riksmaal as the official language of Norway. The Government's resolution however, has met with considerable opposition from the Riksmaal societies. ¶ The Norwegian Aero Club was founded in Oslo on May 3d. Captain Roald Amundsen was elected chairman. The Club is starting with a membership of 150. ¶ Harold Otto, the founder of Centralteatret, Oslo, died on May 13, 63 years of age. As a theatre manager Mr. Otto had very few equals in Norway. He was at the same time a good actor and an extremely able administrator, and no man was more popular in the theatrical world of Oslo. ¶ Two wellknown Norwegian-Americans, Mr. S. Olstad and Professor Wilhelm Pettersen from Min-

neapolis visited Norway in May and were the guests of honor at a luncheon, given by Normandsforbundet. The President of the League, Mr. Hambro, presented Mr. Olstad with a diploma, thanking him for the excellent work he has done for Norwegian culture in America. Mr. Hambro also thanked professor Pettersen for his work as author and scientist. ¶ A statue of Alexander Kielland, the famous novelist, was unveiled in his native city, Stavanger, on May 6. The monument which is situated in the centre of the market-place, close to the old cathedral, is the work of a Stavanger sculptor, Magnus Vigrestad. ¶ Oslo having already a section of the Alliance Francaise, an Anglo Norse society and Norge-Amerika Fondet now has also an association to promoting cultural relations with Germany and Austria, founded in the beginning of May. Professor Axel Holst, the former rector of Oslo University, was elected president. The new society is by no means pro-German in a political sense; among its most prominent members are to be found persons who during the war took a pronounced pro-allied attitude. ¶ In spite of the treaty, concluded some years ago, there is still considerable disagreement between Norway and Denmark concerning Greenland. Replying to an interpellation by Mr. Mellbye, the leader of the Farmers' Party, in the middle of May Mr. Mo-winckel, the Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the number of open harbours in Western Greenland had been increased from three to five. This was, however, not satisfactory to Norway, and the Government had sent Denmark a note, asking that more harbors should be opened and that fishermen and whalers should have access to Western Greenland on the same conditions as in other countries. Denmark is anxious to meet the wishes of Norway as far as it is compatible with the existing legislation. The negotiations between the two countries are continuing.



SWEDEN

¶ Showered with tributes of loyalty and personal esteem from near and far, King Gustav V celebrated on June 16 his 70th birthday and at the same time the 20th anniversary of his reign, which really came last fall. As a token of the country's gratitude, in particular for his aid in helping Sweden escape the horrors of war, a jubilee gift of nearly \$1,000,000 was presented to him, subscribed to throughout the country and also by Swedes and their friends residing abroad. At the King's request the money will be used for the suppression of cancer. A similar jubilee gift collected for his father, the late King Oscar II, in 1897, was devoted to the work against tuberculosis. Unexpectedly the health of Queen Victoria improved sufficiently to enable her to make the journey from Rome to Stockholm accompanied by Prince William, a few days before the celebration. ¶ Just before the Riksdag was dissolved until after the general elections in September, the Ekman Government won a handsome victory in the adoption of a new law to promote peace on the labor market. The vote was 82 against 53 in the First Chamber and 117 against 106 in the Second. This indicates that the ministry faces the electoral campaign in a strong position, despite being technically a minority government. The opposition vote in the Second Chamber indicates the strength of the labor opposition, which during the debate organized a demonstration of protest. In Stockholm it was estimated that 20,000 men marched past the House of Parliament, led by Per Albin Hansson, former Minister of National Defense and leader of the Social-Democratic Party. Mounted police were held in readiness but there was no disorder. In Gothenburg and other places there was a temporary cessation of work. The new law forbids

lock-outs and strikes while a collective labor agreement is in force and holds individual labor union members civilly responsible. To interpret disputed sections of a labor contract, a special court was set up from whose decisions there is no appeal. ¶ For the coming electoral campaign the Swedish labor forces united with the purpose of obtaining a majority in the Second Chamber of the next Riksdag. The strength of the Social-Democrats and the four Communists is now 109, whereas the entire membership is 230. At the Social Democratic party convention in Stockholm, Per Albin Hansson was re-elected leader with Gustav Möller, former minister of Social Service as Secretary. The opposition was lead by Arthur Engberg, present editor of *Social-Demokraten* and Z. Höglund, leader of the Left Socialist group. The outcome was regarded as a victory for the more moderate factions of the Swedish labor movement, which will in part offset the charge of influence from Moscow, based on the electoral merger with the Communists. ¶ The labor conflict in the mining industry continued unbroken as all attempts at mediation proved fruitless. As a result of this and other labor conflicts, the foreign trade balance showed a total surplus of imports over exports of more than \$45,560,000 during the first three months of the year against only \$19,296,000 for the same period in 1927. In connection herewith the total foreign currency reserve of the Swedish banks was reduced from \$129,444,000 months of the year. ¶ Sweden participated in the search for the lost crew of the "Italia," of which Dr. Malmgren is the meteorologist, sending first an expedition of 17 men led by Captain L. E. Tornberg, three military aeroplanes, and two ships from Tromsø, and then the three-motored all metal civil airship "Uppland" which usually covers the Stockholm-Helsingfors line.

THE AMERICAN SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

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Associates: All who are in sympathy with the aims of the Foundation are invited to become Associates. **Regular Associates**, paying \$3.00 annually, receive the *REVIEW*. **Sustaining Associates**, paying \$10.00 annually, receive the *REVIEW* and *CLASSICS*. **Life Associates**, paying \$200.00 once for all, receive all publications.

Owen D. Young a Trustee

At the May meeting of the Board, Mr. Owen D. Young of New York was elected a Life Trustee of the Foundation. Mr. Young is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Elec-

tric Company and of the Radio Corporation of America. He is a graduate of St. Lawrence University, and a graduate in law of Boston University. He has received honorary degrees from Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Yale, and other universities. He is a director of the General Motors Corporation, of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and of several business corporations of great importance. He has served during and since the war as an American representative in numerous domestic and international conferences on economic problems, being a member of the First Committee of Experts on the Reparations Commission of 1924 and unofficial advisor of the Premiers' Conference of that year. He had a great part in the formation of the so-called Dawes Plan. Mr. Young is Honorary Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States and led the American delegation to the congress of the International Chamber of Commerce held in Stockholm last year, the members of which delegation contributed funds to support the Foundation's interchange of students.



Underwood and Underwood
OWEN D. YOUNG

Mr. Creese Resigns

After almost seven years as General Secretary of the Foundation and director of its undertakings, Mr. James Creese will retire from his office in the Foundation this fall to become Vice-President and Treasurer of the Stevens Institute of Technology. Mr. Creese joined the Foundation staff in 1919 as publication manager, and shortly afterward undertook the administration of the student work of the Foundation. When Dr. Henry G. Leach resigned from the office of Secretary in 1921, Mr. Creese was elected to succeed him and has since been the administrative officer of the Foundation responsible to the Board of Trustees. He himself regards the introduction of the Industrial Fellowship programme as the most important item in the Foundation's history during his years as Secretary. In 1926 he received from the King of Sweden the decoration of Knight of the Order of Vasa.

New York Chapter News

The New York Chapter of The American-Scandinavian Foundation held their annual meeting at the Hotel Barbizon on Monday evening, May 7. Officers were elected for the ensuing year as follows: President, Dr. C. Gunnar Molin; Vice Presidents, George H. Lehman, Mrs. Gudrun Löchen Drewsen, and Mr. Eric Löf; Treasurer, Mr. Gunnar Mellgren; Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. Alfred Lindewall; Secretary, Mr. Ansten Anstensen. Baroness Alma Dahlerup, who presented an impressive report of the activities of the Social Committee for the last ten years, was re-elected Chairman of that Committee. Mrs. John Philip Breivogel was named Chairman of the Membership Committee; Mrs. R. M. Michelsen, Chairman of the Publicity Committee; and Dr. Henry Goodard Leach, Chairman of the Advisory Committee. Mr. Harold Rambusch, for several years Treasurer of the Chapter was

unanimously elected Honorary Vice-President.

Through the courtesy of the management of the Swedish-American Line, a dance and bridge party on the motor ship *Gripsholm*, May 10, enabled the Chapter to turn over to the Foundation funds for a Fellowship in the exchange of students. Between four and five hundred members of the Chapter attended this notably successful function; and to them as well as to the officers and Social Committee of the Chapter, the Foundation takes this occasion to extend hearty thanks for so substantial aid in our major purposes. The Chapter a few months ago established a Fellowship Fund in their accounts, which it is hoped will be replenished steadily so that the Chapter may continue to participate in this way in the student work of the Foundation.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Airplane Routes to Iceland

Iceland will soon altogether lose her sometime title of "The Hermit of the Atlantic" if the plans for airplane service between her and the Continent materialize. The German company, Luft-Hansa, are said to be about to establish a station in Reykjavik from which two large airplanes are to maintain routes to various cities in Iceland, and during a part of the year at least regular service between the island and the Continent is also contemplated.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Colonel Lindbergh is studying the feasibility of flying to Europe by way of the Arctic Circle, or over the old Viking trail, starting from Newfoundland and making landings in Greenland and Iceland.

Captain Centennial

"Captain Centennial's" other name was Captain Alfred Johnson, and his love for the sea was an inheritance from Danish



CAPTAIN ALFRED JOHNSON

forebears, for he was born in a coast town near Copenhagen in 1845. At the early age of fourteen he became a sailor, and later he followed the sea as a fisherman, making Gloucester, Massachusetts, his home port. And from it on June 14, 1876, he set sail across the Atlantic alone in his fourteen-foot dory. Sixty-six days later he anchored at Liverpool, and his is the first crossing from America to Europe, in this simple and heroic fashion, of which we have a record.

Nansen in America

Fridtjof Nansen was in America from the fourth to the nineteenth of May. At the meeting of the Trustees of the Foundation on May 5, he reviewed briefly his work in Armenia as High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees. The primary reason for his visit was to speak at the conferences on international peace held in Cleveland early in May,

but he spoke also in Chicago, at St. Olaf College and at Luther College. In New York he addressed the American Geographical Society on modern problems of Arctic exploration and gave an account of his plans for flying over the polar regions by dirigible in 1929; in Washington, he addressed the Academy of Science. On the seventeenth of May he spoke to an enthusiastic audience of 6000 met in celebration of Norway's Independence Day.

Denmark's Church of Thanksgiving

Denmark has a national Church of Thanksgiving (Taksigelses Kirken) erected in Copenhagen by popular subscription as an expression of gratitude that the country escaped the horrors of being drawn into the World War. America has a part in this memorial in as much as the church's magnificent cathedral organ is the gift of one of our great organ builders, Mathias Peter Möller, of Hagerstown, Maryland. Mr. Möller was born in Denmark, on the island of Bornholm, but came to America



Underwood and Underwood
M. P. MÖLLER

at the age of seventeen, and he has now for fifty years been engaged in building pipe organs at his factory, said to be the largest in the country. In recognition of his services King Christian X has recently bestowed on him the Order of Knighthood of Dannebrog.

Ibsen's Brand at Yale University

To the Department of Drama of Yale University, directed by George Pierce Baker, must be given the credit of the first production of Ibsen's *Brand* in its entirety in English in America. It was presented as the final play of the college year on May 28 and 29 in honor of the Ibsen centenary.

A condensed version of the translation by Professor C. H. Herford of England was used, and the cast included forty-three actors, students of the famous "47 Workshop." Particular stress was laid on the scenic designs and the lighting in order to bring out effectively the mystical and symbolic nature of the play.

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